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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## 6 Minute Grammar

### Present perfect and ever/never



*NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Finn**

Hello. Welcome to 6 Minute Grammar with me, Finn.

**Alice**

And me, Alice. Hello.

**Finn**

And today we're talking about the present perfect tense.

**Alice**

That's right: the present perfect tense. When we use it, how to form it, how to make negatives and questions...

**Finn**

We'll look at the words **ever** and **never**...

**Alice**

And we'll have some pronunciation tips.

**Finn**

And there'll be a quiz at the end of the show, so keep listening!

**Alice**

Let's get started with some present perfect sentences. Hello Catherine!

**Catherine**

Hello.

**Alice**

Some example sentences please...

**Catherine**

I've seen Miley Cyrus in concert.

Janie has travelled all over the world.

**Finn**

Thank you, Catherine. So one way we use the present perfect tense is to talk about life experience: things we've done at some time in the past.

**Alice**

That's right and we make the present perfect tense with a subject, plus **have** or **has**, plus a past participle. Once more please Catherine.

**Catherine**

I've seen Miley Cyrus in concert.  
Janie has travelled all over the world.

**Alice**

Now we don't say when this experience happened, because with the present perfect, we are interested in the experience itself.

**Finn**

That's right. The present perfect often focusses on what happened, not when it happened.

**Alice**

Ok. So Finn, ask me a question about something I've done.

**Finn**

Ok. **Have you seen Skyfall?**

**Alice**

**Have I seen Skyfall?** The James Bond film? **Yes, I have: I've seen it three times.**

**Finn**

Three times, eh? So with the present perfect we don't say when, but we can say how many times the experience happened.

**Alice**

Now, let's look at **ever** and **never**. They basically mean 'at any time in someone's life'.

**Finn**

**Ever** is very common in questions. Alice: **Have you ever eaten sushi?**

**Alice**

**Yes, I have.** I love sushi.

**Finn**

Me too. And Alice, have you **ever** ridden a camel?

**Alice**

No Finn, no: I have never ridden a camel.

**Finn**

Well, actually, neither have I. And we use **never** to talk about life experiences that we haven't had. **Alice has never ridden a camel.** Though I think you should try it: I hear it's fun!

**Alice**

Really? Let's do it together.

**Finn**

Yes, ok.

**Alice**

Let's look at pronunciation. We use lots of short forms with present perfect.

**Finn**

First, **I have** is often shortened to **I've**. **I have** read that book becomes...

**Alice**

**I've read** that book.

**Finn**

And **has** becomes just a **s** or a **z** sound. So instead of **Janie has** travelled it's...

**Alice**

**Janie's** travelled.

**Finn**

And as for negatives: we make them by putting **not** between **have** or **has** and the past participle. But we can shorten **have not** to **haven't** and **has not** to **hasn't**. Catherine.

**Catherine**

I **haven't** seen all the Bond films.

Rachel **hasn't** taught English in Japan.

**Finn**

Now, in sentences with **never**, the subject and **have** or **has** can be shortened. **I have** becomes **I've**, and **he has** becomes **he's**. Catherine

**Catherine**

**I've** never heard of Sportlobster.

Poor Alice – **She's** never ridden a camel!

**IDENT**

You're listening to BBC Learning English.

**Finn**

And we're talking about the present perfect tense. Alice, now ask me a question about my life experiences.

**Alice**

Ok... **Finn, have you seen Skyfall?**

**Finn**

Well, a negative answer would be **No, I haven't**. But my answer is: **Yes I have**. Guess how many times I've seen Skyfall?

**Alice**

Ok... I think **you've seen it** five times.

**Finn**

No... not five times.

**Alice**

Ok. **How many times have you seen Skyfall?**

**Finn**

**I've seen Skyfall** 20 times... I **watched** the DVD last night; I **saw** it on TV last week; and I **saw** it at the cinema when it first came out...

**Alice**

Ok, Finn – we get the picture... When we answer a present perfect question about our experience, we can add a past simple sentence to give more information – like saying when the experience happened.

**Finn**

Quiz time?! So here's question one – and play along at home if you want. **Alice**, you have to answer with **never**. So: **Have you ever seen a ghost?**

**Alice**

No, I've never seen a ghost.

**Finn**

Are you sure?

**Alice**

Maybe.

**Finn**

Now, for question two, answer with **times**. **How many times have you eaten sushi?**

**Alice**

I've eaten sushi about a million times.

**Finn**

About a million times? Really? Only a million? Now for question three, I need a short answer. **Have you ever visited BBC Learning English on Facebook?**

**Alice**

Yes, I have!

**Finn**

OK – me too. And as well as on our Facebook page, you can find lots more information about the present perfect tense on our website at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com). Join us again for more 6 Minute Grammar.Head. H

**Both**

Bye.